

State, both by rule and enforcement. In this day and age, that is not acceptable.

That is why I have worked, along with my colleague Senator DORGAN, to ensure this legislation remedies these inequities by establishing, for the first time, minimum uniform national health and safety standards. These provisions will ensure that every professional boxing match in the United States is conducted under these standards. Every professional boxer will know that, no matter where they fight, there will be a doctor at ringside; an ambulance available; and health insurance provided.

I also want to commend our colleagues in the House who significantly strengthened this legislation by adopting a provision I have previously proposed—prohibiting conflicts of interest on the part of boxing regulators. My investigation highlighted conflicts of interest to be among the major problems facing boxing today, always to the detriment of the boxers. Dealing with this problem is essential if we are to effect meaningful boxing reform.

Dave Tiberi has never fought again, despite numerous lucrative offers. Instead he has dedicated his efforts to working with young people in Delaware and reforming boxing. If there has ever been a role model in boxing for our young people, his name is Dave Tiberi. Although he never got his world title, knowing that his hard work will protect future boxers is his big payday; and that is why Dave Tiberi will always be a champion.

Boxing reform is not a marquee issue that appeals to a large constituency. As such, it could be easily pushed aside and lost among all the other issues clamoring for attention in the final days of this Congress. Yet, professional boxing is important, not only to its millions of fans, but primarily because the sport creates opportunities for many young men for whom such opportunities are rare. We owe these young men a system outside the ring that works as hard to protect them as they do inside the ring. That is why I have worked to reform professional boxing. While it does not go far enough, I believe this legislation is a significant step toward achieving that goal. I commend and thank my colleagues for adopting this important legislation.●

H.R. 3118, VETERANS' HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY REFORM ACT OF 1996

● Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3118, the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, as amended by the committee substitute. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of the substitute amendment, which provides for greater uniformity and flexibility in veterans' health care eligibility, enacts significant improvements in health care programs, and authorizes major construction projects.

I am especially pleased with sections of the bill that make improvements in the Readjustment Counseling Service [RCS] program. As my colleagues know, RCS operates over 200 community-based vet centers around the Nation, each of which provides a variety

of services designed to help returned veterans adjust to civilian life. These include services relating to post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, disaster assistance, sexual trauma, alcohol and substance abuse, suicide prevention, the physically disabled, and minority veterans. To date, vet centers have successfully assisted well over 1 million veterans.

The RCS improvements in this bill include: making World War II and Korea theater veterans eligible for vet center services for the first time; directing VA to study the desirability of collocating vet centers with outpatient clinics; directing VA to report on the feasibility of providing limited, primary health care services at vet centers; making the Advisory Committee on Readjustment of Veterans a permanent, statutory entity; and clarifying and enhancing the status of the Director of RCS, which will guarantee a degree of administrative autonomy for the program.

Mr. President, these provision are derived from S. 403, the Readjustment Counseling Service Amendments of 1995, which was cosponsored by Senators DASCHLE, WELLSTONE, INOUE, and JEFFORDS. S. 403 in turn was derived from legislation I originally offered in the 103d Congress which twice passed the Senate. I am disappointed that some of the provision of S. 403 were not included in this compromise measure. These include provisions that would have: made RCS a statutory agency within VA, required congressional notification of proposed changes to the administrative or organizational structure of RCS, required a specific RCS operating budget to be identified in VA's annual budget submission, and authorized vet centers to offer bereavement counseling to the families of service persons killed in service. Nevertheless, I am deeply appreciative that many of the goals of that legislation have been achieved in the pending measure.

Mr. President, many people deserve to be recognized for their efforts in making possible the RCS provisions in this bill. First, I would like to thank Senators SIMPSON and ROCKEFELLER and their respective staffs, notably Chris Yoder and Bill Brew, for putting together this compromise.

Second, I wish to recognize Al Batres, Susan Angell, Stephen Molnar, and other RCS employees, whose testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in 1993 provided the original justification for my legislation. Steve Molnar, Director of the Honolulu Vet Center, has been, and continues to be, a source of inspiration for his untiring dedication to the Aloha State's veterans.

Last, I wish to acknowledge the contributions of Gerry Kifer, a former Congressional Fellow with my office, whose insights and hard work led to the drafting of my original RCS legislation. Gerry provided the focus and energy that made today's legislation possible.

Thank you, Mr. President. I hope my colleagues can support the RCS provisions contained in H.R. 3118, as amended. I urge swift enactment of the bill.●

REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S 85TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask that the following letter of congratulations recognizing the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China be

printed in the RECORD. In light of the efforts at political reform and recent economic successes of the Republic of China, it is appropriate that we honor this important milestone.

The letter follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC.

President LEE TENG-HUI,
c/o Foreign Minister John H. Chang, the Republic of China, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

DEAR PRESIDENT LEE: We wish to extend our greetings to you, Vice President Lien Chan and Foreign Minister John H. Chang on the occasion of the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China.

In the last few years, Taiwan has impressed the world with economic success and political reform. We are well aware of your efforts in cooperating with us on matters of mutual interest. We are also aware of your recent campaign to rejoin the United Nations and other international organizations. As you seek to develop even better ties with the U.S. and shoulder more international responsibility, we wish you and your countrymen every success.

Representative Jason Hu has done an excellent job of keeping members briefed on what has been happening in your country. He and his staff are to be commended for their efforts.

Mr. President, may you and your people have a wonderful 85th anniversary celebration. Congratulations.

Sincerely,

TRENT LOTT.
THAD COCHRAN.
DON NICKLES.
LARRY E. CRAIG.●

THE DEFENSE MANPOWER DRAWDOWN

● Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, almost 4 years ago I made a series of speeches about our men and women in uniform who won the cold war.

I asked my colleagues to remember their sacrifice as we undertook the unprecedented drawdown of our All Volunteer Force.

I asked that we ensure that the drawdown was accomplished in a way that preserved the legacy of national security which that force had built.

And I called on the Congress to see that people leaving military service were given a helping hand as they moved into civilian life, because we owed it to them and because the Nation needed their skills.

When I made those remarks, the post-cold-war drawdown was mostly in front of us. Although it had started in 1987, the downsizing moved slowly at first and then halted completely for Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Today, as I rise to review what has happened in the intervening 3 years, the downsizing is over 90 percent complete, and next year it will essentially be complete.

Let me begin by looking at the drawdown and how we did at meeting this enormous challenge. In the late 1980's, after the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, it became clear that we could make significant reductions in the size of our Armed Forces. It was decided by the Bush administration and the Congress to reduce military personnel by approximately one-third over a period of 5 years.

As a nation, we had experience with large demobilizations after World War